

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 13681

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, XT

SUBJECT: THE ZARODOV MEETING, DETENTE, AND THE EUROPEAN
PARTY CONFERENCE

REFS: (A) STATE 224925 (B) MOSCOW 13362

(C) MOSCOW 12780 (D) MOSCOW 12769

1. SUMMARY. INR'S INCISIVE REPORT ON THE BREZHNEV-ZARODOV MEETING PINPOINTS THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES AS THE ADDRESSEES OF WHATEVER MESSAGE WAS INTENDED, AND WILL BE OF ASSISTANCE IN DEVELOPING FURTHER DETAILS HERE. HOWEVER, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE IMPRUDENT TO READ THE PROSPECTS OF GREATER SOVIET MILITANCY TOWARDS THE WEST OR DETENTE OUT OF THE MEETING, ALONG OR IN COMBINATION WITH ARBATOV'S SEPTEMBER 3 DEFENSE OF DETENTE, AT THIS TIME. THERE ARE MORE SIGNS OF DOUBT NOW THAN SOME MONTHS AGO, AND GIVEN THE FADING OF SOME CHEERY SPRINGTIME HOPES, GREATER MILITANCY IS PROBABLY ONE STRATEGIC OPTION FOR THE SOVIETS. BUT WE HAVE SEEN NO SOLID EVIDENCE THAT THEY HAVE CHOSEN OR ARE YET SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING IT. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY APPEAR DETERMINED TO PRESS FORWARD IN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS IN KEY AREAS, AND BREZHNEV'S MEETING WITH ZARODOV IS COMPLETELY OVERSHADOWED BY THE SPECTACULAR MEDIA PLAY ON HIS MEETING WITH THE ASTRONAUTS, INCLUDING HIS EMPHASIS ON SALT
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AND FORWARD MOVEMENT. IF THERE IS TO BE A TURN TOWARD

SELECTIVITY AND DISCRIMINATION IN DETENTE, WE THINK IT WOULD FOLLOW FAILURE OF CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS AND WOULD APPEAR FIRST IN PRIVATE. WE TEND TO READ ZARODOV MEETING AS A SIGN OF DIFFICULTIES IN PREPARING THE EUROPEAN MEETING AS A SIGN OF DIFFICULTIES IN PREPARING THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST CONFERENCE. IN OUR VIEW, SOVIETS STILL WANT THE CONFERENCE TO TAKE PLACE, AND HAVE AN INCENTIVE TO STILL THE CONTROVERSY OVER REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS. HOWEVER, AS WITH SUBSTANTIVE ATTACK ON MAOISM IN AUGUST COMMUNIST, SYMBOLIC BLESSING OF ZARODOV COULD INDICATE THEY ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT NON-SUBSTANTIVE CONFERENCE WHILE WRITING PRINCIPLE CPSU POSITION INTO RECORD UNILATERALLY. EFFECT WOULD BE TO LIBERATE RECALCITRANT EUROPEAN PARTIES AND MAKE CONFERENCE POSSIBLE, WHILE REINFORCING DISCIPLINE AMONG WEST AND EAST EUROPEAN CLIENT PARTIES. EFFECT ON DETENTE, IF ANY, WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE IN DIRECTION OF HARDER LINE. BREZHNEV MAY BE PROTECTING HIS FLANK, BUT THIS FLANK HAS ALWAYS EXISTED AMONG THE IDEOLOGISTS AND OLD-STYLE APPARATCHIKI, AND ON DOMESTIC ISSUES AT LEAST HE HAS MADE HIS CAREER IN HARMONY WITH IT. ON BALANCE, THEREFORE, WE ARE NOT INCLINED TO READ ZARODOV MEETING AS EVIDENCE OF A TREND TOWARD GREATER FOREIGN POLICY MILITANCY. END SUMMARY.

2. THE INR REPORT ON THE BREZHNEV-ZARODOV MEETING (REF A) IS CHARACTERISTICALLY COGENT AND INCISIVE IN ITS ANALYSIS OF THIS SIGNIFICANT EVENT. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE SYMBOLISM IN WHICH THE MEETING WAS DEVELOPED BY THE PRAVDA REPORT IS INTENDED TO CONVEY AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE (REF B), AND THERE IS A STRONG LIKELIHOOD, AS INR POINTS OUT, THAT THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES ARE THE ADDRESSEES. AS THE ANALYSIS IS CERTAINLY BASED ON A BROADER RANGE OF EVIDENCE THAN IS AVAILABLE HERE, IT WILL BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE IN OUR EFFORT TO DEVELOP FURTHER DETAILS.

3. AT THE SAME TIME, UNTIL MORE AND BETTER EVIDENCE IS AVAILABLE AS TO WHAT THE MEETING'S MESSAGE IS SUPPOSED
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TO BE, WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE IMPRUDENT TO EXTRAPOLATE FROM THIS SINGLE EVENT, OR FROM A COMBINATION OF THE BREZHNEV-ZARODOV MEETING SEPTEMBER 18 AND ARBATOV'S SEPTEMBER 3 IZVESTIYA ARTICLE ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS (REF C), TO REACH THE CONCLUSION THAT GREATER SOVIET MILITANCY TOWARD THE WEST OR TOWARD DETENTE IS IN STORE.

4. SOME OF THE ROSY PROSPECTS WHICH BUOYED THE SOVIETS OVER THE TRADE/EMIGRATION BREAKDOWN WITH US AND INTO THE OPTIMISM OF THIS SPRING HAVE FADED. THERE ARE MORE SIGNS NOW THAN THERE WERE SOME MONTHS AGO OF DOUBT AND PERPLEXITY WITHIN THE SOVIET ESTABLISHMENT. IN ADDITION TO ARBATOV'S DEFENSE OF DETENTE AND THE ZARODOV MEETING, WE NOTE THE EXPLICIT REFERENCE IN SERGEY VISHNEVSKIY'S PRAVDA INTERNATIONAL REVIEW SEPTEMBER 14 TO (UNNAMED) "POLITICIANS AND OBSERVERS" TO WHOM THE "COURSE OF EVENTS" SEEMS "CHAOTIC" OR "INEXPLICABLE", WHO "DO NOT WISH TO OR EVEN CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE DIALECTIC OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT, CANNOT SEE THE FUNDAMENTAL TENDENCIES IN THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF TODAY'S COMPLICATED PHENOMENA." THE CONTEXT STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT THE DOUBTERS ARE DOMESTIC AS WELL AS FOREIGN. AS THE CONGRESS APPROACHES, THEREFORE, GREATER MILITANCY IS OBVIOUSLY ONE STRATEGIC OPTION FOR THE SOVIETS.

5. HOWEVER, WE SEE ABSOLUTELY NO PERSUASIVE EVIDENCE THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE CHOSEN GREATER MILITANCY TOWARD THE WEST, ARE CHOOSING IT, OR ARE AT THIS POINT SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING IT. ON THE CONTRARY, SOVIET PERFORMANCE IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH US AND OTHER WESTERN GOVERNMENTS SEEMS CLEARLY TO INDICATE THAT THE LEADERSHIP REMAINS DETERMINED TO PRESS FORWARD IN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WHICH HAVE SOME PROSPECT OF SUCCESS. VIS-A-VIS THE U.S., THE TALKS ON GRAIN AND MARITIME MATTERS PROVIDE STRIKING EXAMPLES. IN HIS UN SPEECH, SEPTEMBER 23, GROMYKO MADE U.S.-SOVIET DETENTE AN EVER-RECURRING THEME, AND THE SOVIETS ARE ALSO FILLING THEIR SCHEDULE WITH HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS WITH WEST EUROPEANS. IF BREZHNEV'S MEETING WITH

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ZARODOV WAS HIS FIRST PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED APPEARANCE SINCE THE END OF VACATION, HIS MEETING WITH THE ASTRONAUTS AND COSMONAUTS HAS BEEN FAR AND AWAY THE MOST SPECTACULAR. THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS REMARKS, WITH THEIR EMPHASIS ON SALT AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MOVING FORWARD IN OUR RELATIONS, WAS CHEERING ENOUGH, BUT THE MEETING ITSELF HAS ALSO BEEN SPLASHED-- WITH PICTURES -- ACROSS THE FRONT PAGES OF THE PRESS AND ON PRIME TIME (INCLUDING TWELVE MINUTES OF EVENING NEWS SEPTEMBER 22) ON TV. AS YET, THEREFORE, THE SIGNALS POINT TOWARD CONTINUITY, RATHER THAN MORE SELECTIVITY AND DISCRIMINATION IN SOVIET DETENTE EFFORTS, AND EVEN IF A TREND IN THE LATTER DIRECTION WERE TO DEVELOP WE WOULD EXPECT IT TO APPEAR LATER, AS A RESULT OF FAILURE TO ACHIEVE DEMONSTRABLE PROGRESS IN KEY

AREAS NOW UNDER NEGOTIATION, AND FIRST IN PRIVATE
RATHER THAN IN PUBLIC.

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6. IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, WE ARE INCLINED TO INTERPRET THE MEETING WITH ZARODOV PRIMARILY AS A SIGN OF THE VERY REAL DIFFICULTIES THE SOVIETS HAVE ENCOUNTERED AS THEY SEEK TO CONVENE AN EARLY AND SUBSTANTIAL EUROPEAN COMMUNIST CONFERENCE. ALL THE OTHER EVIDENCE ACCUMULATED OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS POINTS IN THE SAME DIRECTION: TOWARD SLIPPAGE AND EVEN TOWARD LIMBO. AS THE INR REPORT NOTES, THERE HAS BEEN CONTROVERSY OVER REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS HERE AND WITH BOTH RULING AND NON-RULLING EUROPEAN PARTIES. PORTUGAL HAS OBVIOUSLY FANNED SUCH CONTROVERSY, ALTHOUGH ONCE THE SOVIETS PLACED A EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA THE WEST EUROPEAN ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE TACTICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE WESTERN PARTIES WOULD HAVE PROVOKED IT IN ANY CASE, AND WE WOULD THEREFORE JUDGE THAT AUTONOMY, RATHER THAN AID TO THE PORTUGUESE PARTY, HAS BEEN THE MAIN BONE OF CONTENTION. SUCH SQUABLLING IS NOT ONLY UNCOMFORTABLE FOR THE PRESENT STATUS QUO LEADERSHIP BUT EMBARRASSING TO THE EXTENT THAT THE LEADERSHIP WAS COUNTING ON THE EUROPEAN CONFERNECE TO PROVIDE AN "ACHIEVEMENT" TO FLAUNT AT THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS. WHILE THE SPECIFIC POINTS AT ISSUE ARE NOT CLEAR (AT LEAST HERE), THE SOVIETS HAVE A REAL INCENTIVE TO END THE CONTROVERSY, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, HOWEVER DIFFICULT THIS MAY BE.

7. IN OUR ANALYSIS OF KOMMUNIST'S BLAST AGAINST
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MAOISM (REF D), WE SPECULATED THAT THE ANTI-CHINESE LINE WAS SO TOUGH THAT ITS APPEARANCE MAY SIGNAL RENUNCIATION OF ANY SERIOUS SOVIET HOPE OF BUILDING AN ANTI-MAOIST CONSENSUS AT A EUROPEAN CONFERENCE AND A CONCOMITANT DESIRE TO WRITE THE SOVIET POSITION INTO THE RECORD UNILATERALLY. IT SEEMS FROM HERE THAT BREZHNEV'S MEETING WITH ZARODOV MAY HAVE GIVEN THE SAME SIGNAL CONCERNING REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS IN THE WEST. IF SO, IT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH OUR IMPRESSION THAT THE SOVIETS ARE INTENT ENOUGH ON CONVENING A CONFERENCE THAT THEY WILL BE WILLING TO GIVE UP A SUBSTANTIVE RESULT AND CONTENT THEMSELVES WITH A SPECTACULAR FESTIVITY WHICH BLESSES THE 24TH CONGRESS PEACE PROGRAM, CSCE, DETENTE AND BREZHNEV PERSONALLY AND CALLS FOR COMMON ACTION AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND FASCISM. THE KOMMUNIST ARTICLE AND THE ZARODOV MEETING WOULD STAND AS DEMONSTRATIONS OF THE CPSU'S PRINCIPLED POSITION ON CONTROVERSIAL QUESTIONS, BUT RECALCITRANT PARTIES WOULD NOT BE REQUIRED TO SIGN ON PUBLICLY.

8. THE EFFECT WOULD BE TO LIBERATE RECALCITRANT EUROPEAN PARTIES (RULING AND NON-RULING), RATHER THAN TO SUBORDINATE THEM TO A HARD LINE. THE ONLY PARTIES REQUIRED TO FALL IN LINE WOULD BE PARTIES IN THE WEST AND RULING PARTIES IN EASTERN EUROPE WHICH ARE ALREADY IN LINE. IN OTHER WORDS, DISCIPLINE WILL BE REINFORCED WHERE IT IS ALREADY BEING ENFORCED. WE NOTE THAT THE GDR (IN THE PRESS) AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND BULGARIA (IN THE HUSAK-TODOROV COMMUNIQUE) HAVE ALREADY ECHOES KOMMUNIST'S STRICTURES ON MAOISM, AND, EVEN THOUGH THE BLESSING OF ZARODOV WAS ENTIRELY SYMBOLIC, WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF SOME TESTIMONIALS OF FIDELITY CONCERNING REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS BEGIN TO APPEAR IN NORTHEASTERN EUROPE AND AMONG CLIENT PARTIES IN THE WEST. IF THIS ANALYSIS IS CORRECT, HOWEVER, THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS MAY FEEL FREE, OR FREER, TO ATTEND A PARTY GET-TOGETHER WITHOUT FEAR OF THE LASH UPON THEIR SHOULDERS, AND FROM THE SOVIET POINT OF VIEW THE PROSPECTS FOR CONVENING A CONFERENCE BEFORE THE CPSU CONGRESS MAY BE IMPROVED.
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9. IT MAY WELL BE THAT IN RECEIVING ZARODOV BREZHNEV WISHED TO PROTECT HIMSELF ON HIS FLANK (I.E., THE MILITANT AND, PROPERLY SPAKING, LEFT WING). IF SO, IT WOULD TESTIFY TO THE STRENGTH OF THESE FORCES IN SOVIET CIRCLES WHICH ATTEND TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST AFFAIRS AS WELL AS TO BREZHNEV'S PENCHANT FOR BEING IN THE CENTER ON EVERY ISSUE OF IMPORTANCE. GIVEN THE HIGH PROFIEL BREZHNEV CHOSE FOR THIS MEETING, THE ISSUE OR ISSUES ARE CLEARLY IMPORTANT, BUT IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT BREZHNEV HAS MADE HIS CAREER IN HARMONY WITH THE IDEOLOGISTS. IN OUR JUDGMENT, ISSUES IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, WHILE IMPORTANT, ARE CLEARLY SUBORDINATE TO THE MAJOR ISSUES OF DETENTE FROM THE SOVIET POINT OF VIEW. FOR THESE REASONS, WE ARE NOT PERSUADED THAT THE ZARODOV MEETING IS A SIGN THAT GREATER MILITANCY TOWARD THE WEST IS IN THE OFFING.

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